

# LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES LESSON PLAN

## TITLE

**The British Empire**

## TOPIC

Historical background, cultural and literary connections concerning the development of the British Empire

## TYPE OF SCHOOL, STUDENTS' AGE, TIMING AND PHASES

Four year students of a Liceo Scientifico (B1) –2<sup>nd</sup> term: May– four hours divided into three teaching periods of fifty minutes each plus a test.

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (language lab, multimedia lab, blended learning, online learning, flipped classroom)

Both the class which is equipped with a LIM and the linguistic laboratory with the Internet connection.

## LEARNING AIMS

The students are requested to understand a crucial period in the history of Great Britain: the creation of an Empire united in name but varied in fact. In addition, they are asked to focus on Australia as an example of Commonwealth country as far as history and slang are concerned.

## TOOLS CHOSEN (Hardware & Software, Web 2.0 tools, Online Resources, etc.)

I'm using a Power Point Presentation so that students will be actively involved intellectually and emotionally in learning the topic. A Power Point Presentation also implies the selection of materials that are appropriated to students' interest and that can stimulate their personal involvement and enrichment. In addition, students will be exposed to a wide range of authentic materials. In fact, I used a software (Free YouTube Downloader) to download three videos. Then, I used another software (Windows Live Movie Maker) to cut and edit the BBC documentary so that it is tailored to my specific need (I selected only the sketch about Livingstone). Afterward, I uploaded the videos on the Power Point presentation. I downloaded all the images and sounds I used from the Internet. I used Edmodo to prepare a test aiming at verifying the student's competences.

## METHODOLOGY AND TEACHING PROCEDURES

I decided to create this learning object in order to carry on my lesson during the TFA training activity hours (i.e. *attivazione*). The students, who are attending the fourth year of the *Liceo Scientifico*, are dealing with the Victorian Age in the course of English Literature. According to my tutor, I'm presenting a general overview of the British Empire: from the foundation to the Commonwealth. Thus, I decided to prepare a lesson about the Australia which, in my opinion, is a country young people like very much. Therefore, I focused even on the slang that is colourful and funny and can easily arouse the

students' curiosity.

Since I'm using a Power Point Presentation, the class has to be equipped with a LIM or with a computer and a projector.

At the beginning of the first lesson, the teacher presents the contents so that the students know what the teacher is dealing with. Then, there is a warm-up activity whose aim is to prepare the students to learn by stimulating their minds as well as to give the teacher information about their knowledge and learning progress. Afterward, the teacher begins to explain the point 2 of the Index which is about the history of the British Empire starting with the first settlements in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and continuing with the size the Empire reached in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In each slide the text is combined with some select pictures. This is a good way to prevent the students missing out the meaning of the text. In addition, pictures turn out to be more likely a good tool to draw the students' attention. The teacher might ask the students to comment them according to the text.

The second lesson revolves around the section 3 of the Power Point Presentation. It is about the Empire meant as a two-faced reality. The teacher introduces the topic talking about the scramble for Africa and then he presents two authors of the English Literature who in their works dealt with the Empire from two different points of view: R. Kipling and J. Conrad. Students are requested to listen to the audio-reading of Kipling's poem: *The White Man's Burden* and to take some notes. After the explanation of Conrad's critical perspective on Empire, the teacher wants the students to watch a short documentary produced by the BBC about Livingstone known as a scientific investigator and explorer, an imperial reformer, an anti-slavery crusader and advocate of commercial Empire. Hardly does the teacher finish his lesson when students are divided into three groups. The teacher gives them two exercises (see slide n° 19). This is a good way of testing their comprehension and of providing the students with a sense of achievement.

At the beginning of the third lesson, the teacher wants the students to focus on the Commonwealth which developed after the fall of the British Empire. In particular, some slides are concerned with one of the biggest and most important countries of the Commonwealth: Australia. The students are asked to watch two videos. The former deals with the main steps in the history of Australia while the latter with the typical Australian slang expressions. The third lesson is carried on together with the mother tongue teacher who does come from Australia! So, the students are exposed to the genuine sounds of Australian-English.

During the fourth lesson hour in the linguistic laboratory the students are required to do a quiz prepared by the teacher with Edmodo. In this way they can verify their learning progress.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

What the TEACHER does	What (individual) STUDENTS or GROUP OF STUDENTS do
The teacher introduces the topic also using the warm-up questions at the beginning of the Power Point Presentation. The teacher is like a guide and a reference rather than a traditional lecturer. In order to create this Power Point Presentation	The students are not required to be passive spectators of the lesson. On the contrary, they should have an active role in catching the most important aspects concerning the topic explained by the teacher. That is why the slides should have a few key points on each of them, which briefly

<p>the teacher has to be able to use some of the features typical of this software: for example adding audio and video files, creating hyperlinks between external websites. In particular, video and iconic resources are a great way to add visual stimuli, since they are best used as an extension of the lecture and not as a replacement. When used properly they can help to heighten the educational experience for students and raise the level of engagement and achievement during the lessons.</p>	<p>summarize the theme the teacher is making, and an image that can draw the students' attention in an effective way. Inserting video into the PowerPoint Presentation helps keep the momentum of the lesson. The presentation is not disrupted by having to switch from Power Point to another video playing device. So, students are kept focused on the subject at hand and there is no 'down-time' where they can engage in conversation with their peers. Working in pairs or in groups is an effective way to engage and captivate students. In particular, those with different backgrounds are allowed to bring their special knowledge, experiences, or skills to a project and to explain their orientation to others. In the end, the final test is a useful device to allow the students to test their knowledge in order to prepare themselves to a following oral test with their everyday teacher.</p>
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#### ASSESSMENT (weak and strong points, learning added value)

<p>I haven't had the chance to use this presentation with a real class yet. However, I'm familiar with Power Point Software because I used to create Power Point Presentations at university and also last year when I taught for the first time. That is why, I strongly believe that it is a very useful device in creating clear, well structured presentations that have a strong visual impact. In addition, Edmodo provided me with tools so that the students can connect and collaborate, share contents, and access online tests. Even the other software I used provided to be very effective because they allowed me to deeply exploited the authentic audio and video materials available on the Net, tailoring them to my specific requirements.</p>
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